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For Immediate Release

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NEW MOTTER AVENUE BRIDGE AND TRAVEL LANES BRING CONGESTION RELIEF TO BUSY US 15 INTERCHANGE IN FREDERICK

\$21.3 Million Project to Replace 57-Year-Old Bridge Reduces Traffic Gridlock and Improves Safety

Officials Gather to Celebrate End of Major Work and Federal, State, County and City Partnership

(December 8, 2014) – Commuters, local businesses, Fort Detrick employees and bicyclists and pedestrians all have reason to celebrate as crews finalize the \$21.3 million Motter Avenue bridge replacement over US 15 and traffic safety project in Frederick. The project was built through a Federal, State, County and City partnership, with all levels of government providing funding to advance the gridlock-reducing project. To celebrate this partnership, and the end of major construction, Maryland Transportation Secretary James T. Smith, Jr., today joined Congressman John Delaney, Maryland Senator Ronald N. Young, Frederick County Executive Jan Gardner, Frederick Mayor Randy McClement, local officials and residents for a ribbon cutting ceremony at the American Legion Francis Scott Key Post #11, which is located next to the new bridge.

“With more than 86,000 vehicles traveling through this area each day, and an additional 15,000 daily vehicles expected by 2030, the time was definitely right to replace this bridge and unlock the gridlock for the citizens of Frederick,” said Secretary Smith. “This is a team effort on a grand scale with leaders from all levels of Government working together to improve the quality of life of Frederick County citizens.”

“A reliable and well maintained infrastructure is vital to creating jobs today in construction and jobs tomorrow through economic growth,” said U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski, Chairwoman of the Senate Appropriations Committee which puts funds in the federal checkbook for transportation projects. “Modernizing and improving the Motter Avenue Bridge we will help alleviate congestion and improve safety as Frederick continues to grow and thrive. I will continue to fight for smart funding through investments in Maryland’s highways and byways, ports and bridges.”

“This is big news. It isn’t just about improving this US 15 interchange and reducing congestion, this new bridge at Motter Avenue will improve the safety and quality of life for Frederick residents, commuters, local students and visitors,” said U.S. Senator Ben Cardin. “I’m proud of the continued federal investment that has supported this growth and our partnership with state and local leadership that has made transportation infrastructure a priority.”

“I’d like to thank and congratulate everyone who worked so hard to complete this project,” said Congressman Delaney. “Frederick is one of the jewels of our state and a growing economic powerhouse. When the last Motter Avenue Bridge was built, Frederick’s population was approximately a third of what it is today. We have a public sector obligation to make sure that our communities have the infrastructure they need to thrive and this important project would not have been possible without the cooperation of federal, state, county and city officials. Maintaining and expanding our infrastructure should be one of our top national priorities because it helps our economy, our quality of life and improves public safety.”

The project replaced the existing four-lane Motter Avenue bridge over US 15 (Catocin Mountain Highway), built in 1957, with a six-lane bridge that includes bicycle lanes and wider sidewalks. The two additional lanes on the new bridge include a center turn lane for traffic turning left onto the US 15 ramps, and a third northbound through lane that will provide continuous traffic flow for drivers exiting northbound US 15 and proceeding across the bridge toward Thomas Johnson Drive.

"I am delighted to join The City of Frederick and the Maryland Department of Transportation at this ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the completion of the Motter Avenue Bridge over US 15," said County Executive Gardner. "This important bridge impacts our citizens on a daily basis, as well as the thousands who commute to their jobs or come to enjoy our outstanding tourism, dining and shopping attractions. The improvements from this project provide an important economic boost to our many businesses in the area and enhance the safety and operations for motorists. I commend the State Highway Administration for completing the project as quickly as possible while minimizing impacts to local residents and drivers."

"I am very happy to see the completion of this project. The Motter Avenue bridge ties into with the City's recent work in this area, including the full depth reconstruction of Thomas Johnson Drive and the intersection improvements on Opossumtown Pike," said Mayor McClement. "These projects will alleviate traffic congestion in one of the most highly traveled roads in the City. The bridge upgrades allow us to make this area more pedestrian friendly, especially for the students of Thomas Johnson High School."

Crews from Kibler Construction Company, Inc., of Finksburg, Md., began work in spring 2012 and will complete roadway work by the end of this month. Crews will return in spring 2015 to complete storm water management, remove the temporary pedestrian bridge and finish landscaping. The \$21.3 million project includes \$16.1 million in federal funding, \$962,000 in State funding, \$500,000 in County funding and \$3.8 million in City funding. The city's portion of the project added an additional lane in each direction on Opossumtown Pike and additional turn lanes on Thomas Johnson Drive. See attached project fact sheet for more details on the project.

Additional project details include:

- Lengthened the deceleration lanes on northbound and southbound US 15 at the Motter Avenue interchange to help reduce rush hour backups at the heavily-used exit.
- Enhanced pedestrian safety by upgrading sidewalks and pedestrian signals throughout the project area to meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards.
- Added bicycle lanes on the bridge and shared-use pavement markings on Opossumtown Pike to make the route more bicycle-friendly. Located between Gov. Thomas Johnson High School and Frederick Community College, the project area serves many students on foot and bicycle.
- In response to a suggestion received at the Project Informational Meeting, the State Highway Administration added a warning beacon on the ramp from northbound US 15 near the high school that will flash when pedestrians push a button to cross the ramp.
- Widened the new Motter Avenue bridge to accommodate potential future widening of US 15.

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